

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 SSO-00 SP-02 NSCE-00

MCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 EB-08

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5738

AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SANA 4106

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US

SUBJ: ARMS FOR YEMEN

REF: JIDDA 6037

1. THERE ARE NUMBERS OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES TO EMISSARY AND SPECIAL MESSAGE WHICH SULTAN HAS REQUESTED.

2. ON PRO SIDE, SALIH MENTIONS IN ALMOST EVERY CONVERSATION THAT HE WANTS TO BE TREATED AS CHIEF OF STATE, NOT ACCESSORY TO PLANS MADE ELSEWHERE BY SAUDIS AND AMERICANS. HE LAYS HEAVY STRESS ON DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. HE NEEDS REASSURANCE AND ADVICE.

3. ON OTHER HAND, HE WANTS EQUIPMENT PROMISES. HE HAS ALSO SAID THAT HE APPRECIATES ASSURANCES LIKE THOSE IN JULY CARTER LETTER TO HIM, AT TIME OF ELECTION, BUT HE NEEDS WEAPONS TO FACE THREAT FROM SOUTH. NEW LETTER WHICH DID NOT PROVIDE HIM MORE DETAILS THAN HE ALREADY HAS MAY SIMPLY SET HIM UP TO TURN BACK TO SOVIETS FOR EQUIPMENT THEY ARE SO EAGER TO GIVE AWAY. IT IS NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT SULTAN WANTS THROUGH DEVICE OF EMISSARY TO LET SOME OF THE DISCONTENT OF SALIH AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HAPPENS

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NEXT TO SHIFT FROM SAUDIS TO U.S.

4. AFTER MUCH THOUGHT, I SEE ONLY ONE WAY OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE. THAT WOULD BE TO MAKE COMMITMENTS TO DELIVER PARTICULAR KINDS AND AMOUNTS OF EQUIPMENT WHICH SALIH WANTS -- AND PROBABLY NEEDS TO FACE SOVIETS -- WITHOUT SPECIFYING DATES OF DELIVERY. THESE, WE WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR, WILL COME

IN FUTURE, SUBJECT TO PRODUCTION SCHEDULES AND DETAILED NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN U.S. AND YAR. WE WOULD TELL HIM THAT WE WILL INSIST ON DEVELOPING IN ADVANCE SUPPORT FACILITIES AND CADRES PLUS JOINT ASSESSMENT OF THREAT AND COUNTER-STRATEGY. WE COULD, HOWEVER, SIGN MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING FOR SUCH FUTURE DELIVERIES OF EQUIPMENT.

5. EMISSARY WHO BROUGHT THIS KIND OF PROPOSITION -- WHICH ISN'T TOO FAR FROM WHAT WE ARE PRESENTLY SUGGESTING -- COULD ALSO BRING SOME VERY CLEAR LANGUAGE ABOUT THREAT WHICH SALIH FACES FROM FURTHER COOPERATION WITH SOVIETS AND NEED TO LOOK BEYOND WEAPONS TO OTHER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TACTICS TO USE AGAINST SOUTH. HE COULD WARN ABOUT ESCALATION. HE COULD PRESS SALIH TO ABANDON EXAGGERATED IDEAS ABOUT WHAT IS POSSIBLE WITH UNDERSKILLED YAR ARMY AND TO CONCENTRATE ON TRAINING AND ORGANIZATION. HE COULD POINT OUT MASSIVE ADVANTAGES OF COOPERATION WITH SAUDIS AND U.S. IN MIDDLE EAST OF TODAY AND, AGAIN AND AGAIN, PRESS HOME REASSURANCES AND BUILD CONFIDENCE.

6. IN VIEW FROM SANA, IT WOULD BE WORTH DISPATCHING EMISSARY FROM WASHINGTON WITH ABOVE KIND OF MESSAGE. IF MESSAGE, BY CONTRAST, IS GENERALIZED STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, THEN SECRETARY VANCE COULD HAND IT TO PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-AZIZ ABD GHANI ON 28 AUGUST IN WASHINGTON OR, ALTERNATIVELY, AMBASSADOR WEST -- WHO MAY HOWEVER BE
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SEEN HERE AS SAUDI REPRESENTATIVE AS MUCH AS U.S. ONE -- COULD BRING IT DOWN WHEN HE COMES FOR PRIVATE VISIT IN FEW DAYS.

7. I WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE BETTER IDEA ABOUT YAR VIEWS AFTER SIKES AND FLYNT MEET WITH SALIH. IF SALIH IS AS DEMANDING AND UNREFLECTIVE AS LAST WEEK, I WOULD SAY WE SHOULD CAST BURDEN OF CHANGING HIS MIND ON SAUDIS. IF HE HAS MODERATED SOMEWHAT, THEN WE SHOULD PROBABLY ACCEDE TO SULTAN REQUEST FOR MESSAGE OF WHATEVER SORT POSSIBLE TO SALIH BEFORE LATTER'S TRIP TO KINGDOM.
RANSOM

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